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# UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

AND

# NAPOLEON THE THIRD

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BY

LAURENCE OLIPHANT

"This is understood:
Private injustice may be general good;
But he who gains by base and armed wrong,
Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,
May be dispoiled; even as a stolen dress
Is stript from a convicted thief, and he
Left in the nakedness of infamy."

SHELLEY'S *Fragments.*

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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# PREFACE.

In the pursuance of that policy which has led, within the last few months, to the acquisition by France of Savoy and Nice, the following assurances were at different times offered by the French Government to the Powers of Europe :—

1st, That the annexation of these provinces should not take place at all.

2dly, That before any such annexation the Powers themselves should be consulted.

3dly, That this event should only occur after the *free* consent of the populations interested had been obtained.

4thly, That Faucigny and Chablais should be given to Switzerland ; and

5thly, That the 92d Article of the Treaty of Vienna should be observed in all its integrity.

Considering that the four first of these promises have been deliberately broken without any apology having been offered to the Powers to whom they were made, it is difficult to perceive the object of the last French circular, in which Mons. Thouvenel invites the same Powers to join him in the impossible task of reconciling the 92d Article of the Treaty of Vienna with the 2d Article of the Treaty of Turin. We can only suppose

that the attitude of quiescence and submission which we have maintained under the violation of the earlier pledges, has encouraged the French Government to hope that we may be induced to become active participators in the infraction of the last. In doing so, we should not only condone all former offences against good faith, but recognise the validity of the process by which the recently annexed provinces have been acquired. As, before committing ourselves to such a policy, it is very desirable that some of the details of that process should, as far as possible, be made known in this country, I have ventured to republish here the results of my observation of the practical working of Universal Suffrage as developed under a despotic form of government.

The contents of the following pages, slightly altered, originally appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine;* hence, though in a pamphlet form, they retain their character of personal narrative. If they serve to illustrate the mode by which "the free expression of the wishes of the inhabitants by universal suffrage" has been obtained, the object of my journey to Savoy and Nice will have been accomplished; and the public may perhaps be assisted in their appreciation of what are considered by the French Government "the generally admitted principles of public right and international law," as well as of the nature of "the act" to which Europe is expected to give its adhesion.

# I.

## THE SAVOYARD DEPUTATION.

If the talent for organisation which distinguishes our Gallic neighbours enables them to send into the field an army better fitted to undergo the hardships and overcome the difficulties of a campaign than we can, we may at least find consolation in the reflection that, in all departments not connected with the Government, we are not subject to the thraldom which is the result of this tendency. In the mere arrangements of travel, for instance, the Englishman abroad is constantly conscious of an undue interference, on the part even of non-official employés, with his personal liberty. He dislikes being obliged to be at the station half an hour before the train starts; he is insulted by the presence of a gendarme at the ticket-office, to see that there is no cheating on either side; he is anxious for the rest of his journey about his luggage, because he did not see it put into the train, although he has got a ticket for it; and finally, he is indignant at being kept waiting in the "salle d'attente" until five minutes before the train starts. While seated here, he has time to consider his grievances, and determines, on his return to his native land, to be less ardent in the cause of administrative reform; for he finds, after all, that he is a fortunate individual to have his lot cast in a free-and-easy country, where people have learned "how not to do it." On the night of the 25th of last March, I found myself precisely in the condition of a British traveller making invidious political comparisons of this nature, while standing, in a highly irritable frame of mind, jammed against the glass door of the waiting-room of the Lyons and Geneva Railway, between a fat and somewhat offensive Belgian, and a lady with a baby, which she allowed to rest temporarily on the bundle of wrappers I held under a very

tired arm. We were all waiting to make that rush for seats which is the usual preliminary to a night-journey, and casting longing eyes on the carriage ticketed "Geneva," when, to our horror, a side-door opened, and a posse of gentlemen appeared upon the platform, coolly clambered into the aforesaid carriage, and appropriated all the best seats. It was evident, now, that I had no chance of getting into the corner with my back to the engine, and securing the seat opposite for my legs, by putting my cloaks into it, as though they belonged to some one else. Bulky men were making themselves comfortable in each compartment, so that even the usually perverted sense of their own rights, which distinguished my companions, was roused, and we clamoured vociferously. At last the door was opened by a responsible official, with an air of authority, of whom I inquired, with that polite irony peculiar to persons in a state of suppressed virtuous indignation, what the amount of the sum might have been which he had privately received for giving the choice of seats to the stout gentlemen? (who had by this time filled all the compartments with tobacco-smoke).

"Sir, you insult me!"

"That was my intention; but I feared you might not feel insulted by the remark."

"Take care, sir—but, in fine, I am not master here. It is not my fault; let me show you a seat."

So I was crammed, as the eighth passenger, between seven men—all smoking, all talking, and some of them whose proximity was disagreeable for other reasons. They were to be my companions for the next fifteen hours, during the first ten of which I was fully occupied in making futile endeavours to sleep. My neighbours, when they did not talk, snored, letting their lighted cigars drop feebly out of their mouths as they went to sleep, and carefully retaining as much smoke in the carriage as possible, by keeping both windows shut. At last morning dawned, and we stopped for "café au lait," and under the genial influence of the early meal one's faculties became once more roused, and one's better nature protested against ten hours of unamiability. I made a mental apology to the railway official, and entered into conversation with the pleasantest looking of my seven companions. "You must be old travellers," I said, "to break through the rules of a

French railway. How did you manage last night to get into the carriages before any one else?" "Why, to tell the truth," replied my friend, with a modest downfall of the eye and a quiet simper —"to tell the truth, we are—ahem"—and he looked me full in the face, as though to prepare me for the astounding revelation—"we are the SAVOYARD DEPUTATION." Rallying as well as could be expected from the shock which this announcement produced, I congratulated him upon the success which had attended the mission, and begged to be introduced to the other delegates who had so richly earned any little advantages which a patriotic railway company could grant them.

The rest of the journey proved interesting and agreeable. My companions were men of a certain position in Savoy, advocates, newspaper editors, and political agitators, of whom, however, I think it was bad taste in the French Government to be ashamed. Their names are well known in Savoy, and, though, to a certain extent, they were probably self-elected, still they represent a party, the composition of which I shall notice later. It was only to be expected that they should describe the state of feeling in Savoy as being unanimous in favour of annexation to France. The Savoyards, they declared, had had great cause of complaint against the Piedmontese, more especially since the establishment of constitutional government; the local offices were filled for the most part by Piedmontese authorities, and the interests of Savoy had been permanently slighted and passed over. The Emperor, on the other hand, had promised a very different régime. In the first instance, provisional authorities were to be appointed by the King of Sardinia and the Emperor, each nominating a certain proportion. The good-will of the Emperor towards Savoy might be gathered from the fact that several of the Deputation themselves had already been nominated in this way, although it is not for a moment to be suspected that in coming to Paris they were actuated by any motives of so base a nature as those of personal aggrandisement. Since then all the members of the Deputation have been decorated with the Legion of Honour, and it was even proposed to the Sardinian Government that Count Greffier, the chief of the Deputation, should be appointed Provisional Governor of Savoy. Meantime they considered, no doubt, that the Emperor might be deterred by conscientious scruples from

annexing Savoy, unless quite certain of the favourable disposition of the people, and it was to set the Imperial mind at rest upon this important point that they undertook the journey to Paris. They were now enjoying the gratification which success in a self-imposed mission must always bring with it, more especially when attended with circumstances so complimentary to themselves. There was an evident difficulty in repressing their feelings of exultation when describing the dinner at the Tuileries with the Emperor and Empress, at which only four aides-de-camp and four maids-of-honour were present besides themselves. The courtesy of the Emperor, and the affability of his charming consort, was a theme upon which they naturally loved to dilate; while portraits of these distinguished personages, with the name of the deputy, and "Souvenir du 24 Mars" inscribed on the back in the royal handwriting, were exhibited with a pardonable pride. It was touching, too, to hear how the little Prince Imperial blew kisses to them on his tiny fingers, and how genial and reassuring altogether was the atmosphere of the Tuileries generally. It was indeed difficult to understand how any Savoyard could be so infatuated as to prefer the King of Sardinia, whose only claim consisted in dynastic ties that have not their equal for glory and antiquity in Europe, to an Emperor who displayed so much tenderness and sympathy towards comparative strangers. Let us hope that a closer connection and more intimate acquaintance may only serve to increase these sentiments, and that the members of the Savoyard Deputation may continue to look back, to the last day of their lives, upon their experiences at Court with the same feelings of pride and gratification which they exhibited when I saw them last. It is pleasant, also, to think that, upon future occasions during the life of the Emperor, when deputations may find it necessary to visit the capital for the purpose of preferring requests or having grievances redressed, they will find the same ready ears, and the same cordial anxiety manifested to carry out their wishes. Thus, for instance, when the deputies represented that, upon the removal of the Douane, large losses would be sustained by Savoyard merchants, upon whose stock in hand the duties had been paid, his Majesty, with an amiable generosity, at once promised that they should be reimbursed to the amount of the loss thus incurred.

Again, the people of Savoy are somewhat of an aristocratic tendency, with a prejudice in favour of primogeniture, and opposed to those principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which are so strongly developed in French institutions. They even dislike the law of Sardinia by which the eldest son only gets half the property: the French rule, therefore, upon the subject, by which a father cannot leave more than a quarter of his property to any son, is particularly objectionable; but no sooner was this represented to the Emperor, than he considerately consented to postpone to an indefinite time the operation of the law of France, in so far as it applied to Savoy.

As to the provinces of Faucigny and Chablais, of which I shall have occasion presently to speak, arrangements were made with reference to them, which provided in the kindest and most thoughtful manner for the welfare of the interesting natives of that section of the "bare rock." As to whether or not the vote was ultimately to be taken by universal suffrage, that would remain doubtful until the Sardinian troops and Sardinian influence should be removed—not, in fact, until the people should be free to vote unanimously in favour of France. Meantime French troops were to occupy the country, partly to protect the voters, but chiefly "because," in the Emperor's own words, "the presence of troops always imparts an air of gaiety and animation to the scene." How little did I imagine, the night before, that I should be quite sorry to part from my friends when we arrived at Culoz; their *naïveté* had been refreshing, while it was to a certain extent gratifying to be associated, even indirectly, with men who had so recently filled a prominent place in the public eye. Thus at Bourg, for instance, I found myself in the character of a distinguished Savoyard, when the prefect, who wore lustrous boots and a faultless cravat, came down to the platform and invited us to spend a few hours in his town, where an elegant repast had been prepared, and a *posse comitatus* of citizens were waiting to do us honour. This we regretted to be obliged to decline. I say *we*, because I trust I may be permitted the vanity of identifying myself temporarily with these eminent men.

# II.

## THE NEUTRALISED TERRITORY.

Two hours after parting from the Savoyard Deputation I reached Geneva. The election of deputies to the Turin Chamber was at this time being held throughout Savoy; and a good opportunity would thus be afforded of observing the actual disposition of the inhabitants upon a subject which was of such vital importance to them, more especially as the accounts in the French papers differed widely from those received from other sources.

As might have been expected, there was no difference of opinion on the matter in Geneva itself. All sections of politicians were united in their determination to resist, by every constitutional means, the aggression of France in Northern Savoy. The danger to Geneva itself of the extension of the French frontier in this direction is so evident and so imminent, that the most fierce political opponents combined in the common cause against the common enemy, and followed with an intense interest and anxiety the protocols of European powers, the debates in the English Parliament, the declamations of the French press, the proceedings of the Federal Council at Berne, and the progress of the elections in Savoy. There are circumstances under which it may be gratifying to a small community to feel that "the eyes of Europe are upon it." But when it becomes a shuttlecock for the diplomacy of Europe, the situation is not enviable. Poor, quiet, unoffending Geneva, what had it done that it should be forced into such prominence, and exposed to such peril? This snug retreat of theology and watch-making only asks to be left alone in its unassuming corner, but finds itself, like a bashful girl struggling in the arms of a detested suitor, obliged to call for help. Unhappily she has had some experience of the nature of the advances of the same persevering lover; under spe[illegible]ous pretexts he still seeks to entangle her in the toils of his unlawful affection, until, stifled with his caresses, she must fall an easy victim to his embrace. Upon the last occasion the pretext was purely of a sentimental character. The æsthetic nature of that impulsive and enthusiastic creature Talleyrand could not be

satisfied unless the residence of Voltaire was comprised within the French frontier, and so it was carried across the mountains of the Jura, the "natural boundary" of France, down to within two miles of the northern shore of Lake Geneva, including the whole "Pays de Gex,"—a district some thirty miles long by ten broad, and securing the passes of the Jura, and an easy access for the enamoured one to the feet of his mistress.

Now, it is not from the sentimental but the picturesque point of view that attentions are being paid in the same quarter. It is not from any associations connected with Faucigny and Chablais that the Emperor desires to occupy them with troops, but because soldiers dotted about a mountainous country make it look gay and animated. With France extending along both shores of its lake, Geneva will be like the starling in its cage, until at last its feeble note, "I can't get out," will cease to be heard by the chivalrous nations who guaranteed its free existence. It is not difficult to foresee how the process of absorption will be carried on now that the neutralised territory has become French. Geneva must then become, to all intents and purposes, the capital of a French province, enclosed on one side by the Pays de Gex, and on the other by the provinces of Faucigny and Chablais: it is now the market upon which the inhabitants of both districts depend almost entirely for their subsistence. At present Faucigny alone annually exports into Geneva produce amounting to about seven millions of francs. Its imports from the same emporium exceed three millions. Chablais is also dependent entirely upon this city as a source both of supply and demand, though I was not able to obtain exact data as to the extent of its trade with it. One of the representations to which I have already alluded, made by the Savoyard Deputation regarding these provinces, was with reference to the ruin which must be entailed upon them by the establishment of a line of douane along what would then become the French frontier, thus virtually destroying their trade with Geneva. To meet this difficulty, it has been arranged that, while they should be comprised within the frontier, they should be excluded from the line of douane, which would thus intersect, in an altogether anomalous manner, a portion of France. Surely, if the principle of natural boundaries is worth anything, it should be applied here. It is a palpable incon-

sistency to contend that a district belongs naturally to a country, when it becomes necessary to have recourse to the very unnatural expedient of excluding it from its customs arrangements, in order that it may have the means of subsisting upon another. The interests of Faucigny and Chablais are so intimately connected with Geneva, that the nationality of the one must, in the end, become the nationality of the other. That it has not done so already in the case of Sardinia, arises from the extremely liberal and unaggressive policy of the latter country as regards Switzerland—a policy which, unfortunately, we have no right to expect from the French Government. The natives themselves are so fully alive to the truth of this, that their almost unanimous desire to be united to Switzerland arose not so much from their appreciation of the institutions of this latter country, as from the fact that Geneva forms part of it. If Geneva had been French, it is very possible that these populations would have been contented to have become French also. As it is, the douane arrangement above alluded to, although it will secure them easy access to the Geneva market, will render their position as French subjects in the highest degree inconvenient. They will now become enclosed by a double cordon of French and Swiss douanes; obliged, whenever they wish to enter their merchandise into France, to produce a certificate of origin; whenever they take it into Switzerland, to pay duty on it. Again, inasmuch as the railways of Lyons and Paris have their termini in Geneva, they will never be able to carry either themselves or their produce into France without passing through another country, and crossing their own frontier twice. But as Geneva is the mercantile emporium of these provinces, it will be in this city that the merchant will have to take account of his merchandise, and have it verified by the authorities; then take a Swiss transit for it to one or other of the frontiers, then return from the frontiers to Geneva to prove that he has paid the duty on it. In fact, it is evident that the complications and inconveniences arising out of such a state of things must be endless, and lead to the annexation of the impediment which Geneva would then become to commercial intercourse between one part of France and another.

For Geneva to be Swiss, while Faucigny is French, will be about as convenient to France, as it would be to us, if Lancashire be-

longed to this latter country. Nothing can be more annoying to a proprietor of landed property than for a neighbour to have a field in the centre of it. In our own country, the former would buy it; in America, he would take it; I don't know what they do in France.

At all events, the prospect was not reassuring to the good folks at Geneva, who might be pardoned if they regarded Northern Savoy from a practical rather than a picturesque point of view. Their being, then, no doubt whatever as to the unanimity of all classes of the Genevese community upon the subject of the annexation of the provinces to France, I was anxious to investigate the state of feeling in the neutralised territory itself, and therefore chose the day of election for the deputy to Turin, at Bonneville, to visit that town, which is the *chef-lieu* of the province of Faucigny.

## III.

### AN ELECTION AT BONNEVILLE.

TOURISTS who confine their explorations of Switzerland to the summer months can scarcely appreciate the effect produced by the bracing, exhilarating air of these valleys in March, when the snow lies low upon the mountain-slopes, and objects are distinctly visible at great distances, and there is a stillness in Nature, as though she had not shaken off the winter's sleep. Everything is hard and crisp yet, and we jog merrily along in a one-horse chay up the valley of the Arve, and think, as we look upon the hoary summit before us, that, at all events, the destinies of Europe have chosen a respectable pivot to turn upon. I have, indeed, heard it affirmed, that in the annexation of Savoy the Emperor is actuated partly by his desire to advance the interests of science, and hopes, by becoming possessor of the highest mountain in Europe, to pave the way to fresh discoveries. Whatever be his motives, the rural population of the country do not appreciate them, as we very soon discovered on entering the usually quiet little town of Bonneville. Quiet it would still have been considered, in any other part of the

world, or, at anyrate, not more excited than a small English country town on a very badly attended market-day. There were groups of men in the *Place* discussing the question of their future nationality; but they were not half so excited as the same number of farmers would have been with us discoursing on the price of wheat. This apparent apathy was in a great measure accounted for afterwards, but it struck me very much at the time.

The contrast between the development of free institutions in a country unaccustomed to them, and their development in one where the people are used to self-government, was strongly marked in the election at Bonneville. One looked in vain for election squibs or flags; listened in vain for party cries; sought in vain for active bustling agents canvassing the electors; hoped in vain for a "row." The first impulse of the stranger, if not of the native, was to "rush to the poll." It was held in an upper chamber of the Hotel de Ville. Scrambling up its deserted and dirty staircase, I found myself in a room where three snuffy old gentlemen were smoking cigarettes in a window. Their office was to register the votes, but they evidently did not think I had one, for my appearance created no sensation. A notice was stuck up at the door, that the first *appel* was to be beaten at ten o'clock, and the second at one; also strictly warning voters that any person creating a disturbance should be summarily punished. It was now nearly twelve, and the room was empty. I found afterwards that all the votes had been registered within the first hour, and that the books were to be closed till one, when the second batch would be admitted. When the importance of the occasion was considered upon which the public were now called upon to vote, the pervading apathy seemed unaccountable. To enable the reader to appreciate it, I should explain that, from the result of the election then going on, the general sentiments of the population were to be gathered by the world at large. The question at issue was one upon which the future destiny of the country turned. It was asserted on the part of France, that the general feeling throughout Savoy was in favour of its union with that country. On the other hand, it was no less confidently declared that the opposite was the case. The deputies who were now being returned to the Piedmontese Parliament were the representatives of one or other of these views. The question was not one of internal politics, of Conservative or Radical prin-

ciple, but simply for or against annexation. In Southern Savoy the elections were unanimous in favour of a union with France. In Northern Savoy the same question was put, not so much as between France and Piedmont, as virtually between France and Switzerland. The province of Faucigny returns three members to the Turin Parliament, Chablais sends two. They compose the greater portion of the neutralised territory; and it is evident that, if all five members had been returned in favour of Switzerland, it would have been considered so decided an indication of public feeling as against France, that the Chamber of Deputies at Turin, when called upon to ratify the Treaty, would have been considerably embarrassed, so far as these two provinces were concerned, had the deputies returned by them unanimously protested against their transfer to another power. The rest of Europe would have regarded such a protest as a distinct refusal on the part of the inhabitants of Northern Savoy to become annexed to France; and in addition to the political objections which exist to such a measure, the important constitutional principle would have been established, to which the Emperor himself has so often appealed as absolute—namely, the will of the populations interested. It was therefore clear that, if the inhabitants of Faucigny and Chablais desired to retain their independence, now was the opportunity to make a decided stand. They had been bartered by Piedmont for its own ends, and might therefore feel indisposed to show partiality to a power desirous to dispense with their allegiance; but Switzerland, with which all their interests were so closely bound, was waiting with open arms to receive them into a confederation by which their commercial interests would be advanced and their political liberties secured. It was incomprehensible to suppose that, in the face of the advantages which must accrue to them from annexation to Switzerland, and the nature of which I shall explain more fully presently, they should desire to form an obscure province of an Empire with which they had no commercial interest in common, and in which political liberty was utterly extinguished. Yet inasmuch as four out of the five deputies returned to the Chamber at Turin by these provinces were in favour of this union, such, to the superficial observer, would seem to have been the case. That these returns were, in fact, no criterion of the public feeling, my own observations during these elections lead me confidently to

assert. But it is difficult for those educated under free institutions, conversant with them by tradition, and possessing a special aptitude for putting them in practice, to form a conception of the results of ignorance and timidity among a simple mountain population, when subjected to a moral pressure such as that brought to bear upon it during these elections. For months past, when only the few initiated knew of the bargain which had been effected between France and Sardinia with reference to these provinces, French agents had been at work, and French influence exerted in every form. Sardinia being a party to the transaction, and other countries being ignorant of it, there could, of course, be no counter influence brought to bear. The consequence was, that insidiously the idea that annexation was inevitable became insinuated into the minds of the clergy and employés, the most influential classes in the country, and the least patriotic. How thoroughly it had taken root before the actual annexation was announced, may be gathered from the readiness with which the Savoyard deputation adopted the idea, and availed themselves of their previous information of the inevitable destiny of their country to hasten to Paris, and make political capital.

Three principal causes conspired to induce almost all the employés, more especially of Southern Savoy, to throw themselves into the cause of France. In the first place, they have a very just opinion of the Emperor's diplomatic talent, and are fully persuaded that when he has determined to do a thing, he will do it, though he may have denied any such intention. Consequently, they felt perfectly convinced that, however much they might protest and object, Savoy, to use an American expression, "was bound" to become French. It was its "manifest destiny." It was a case in which the highest wisdom was shown by making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. Any man who was known to have patriotic sympathies now, had destitution hereafter vividly before his eyes. If he was possessed of a lively imagination, he even saw Cayenne looming in the distance. There was a short struggle between heart and stomach, but in a poor country like Savoy stomach is sure to carry the day. Then, by being active in the cause of France, not only did he save his berth, but, in all probability, would obtain promotion. The employés at Bonneville were not ashamed to admit the motives by which they were actuated.

They had the highest regard for Switzerland; if by voting for it they could secure annexation to it, they would not hesitate; but as this was not the case, they really must vote for France, for the sake of their wives and families. Secondly, a great number of the employés in Savoy are actually French, or foreigners who have no sympathy with the country; they naturally vote for France. And, thirdly, ambitious young men want decorations, and have visions of great careers, which humble little Switzerland cannot offer them.

The proportion of employés who were voters in Savoy may be gathered from the fact, that out of 144 votes in the college at Bonneville, 60 were given either by employés or those dependent upon them. For it is to be remarked that a great deal of power rests in the hands of these men, who are considered by the peasantry as omnipotent, and regarded with a degree of awe which it requires a considerable amount of courage on the part of a rustic to shake off. There are a hundred ways in which these petty officials can make a peasant's life miserable to him; and it was only enough to listen to the subdued and frightened tones in which they told you that they had abstained from voting at all out of a desire for Swiss annexation, to perceive how thoroughly demoralised upon the subject they had become. When it is considered a great sign of courage and independence not to vote at all, it must be admitted that electioneering loses all its interest, and its results all their value. Yet such has been the case throughout the parliamentary elections for Savoy and Nice,—it has everywhere been found difficult to get the necessary two-thirds of the voters to come to the polls. At Bonneville itself, the election had been held the week previous to my visit, but found void on this account. The French party had whipped up their people since, however, and there was now little doubt about the result.

Besides the influence brought to bear upon the people by the employés, must not be forgotten that exercised by the priests. Some of these were for annexation to Switzerland, it is true, but the great majority were in favour of France, upon the general broad principle that they preferred belonging to an Empire professing the same state religion as themselves, and under whose protection they would consequently come, to being united to a confederation in which the proportion of Protestants was greater

than that of Catholics, and where there was perfect religious liberty. Those of the priests who were independent enough to take an opposite view, did so on the ground that Roman Catholicism was more likely to flourish free than trammelled to the State, and that, moreover, the accession of Northern Savoy to Switzerland would turn the balance in favour of the Catholics, giving about 1,300,000 Catholics to 1,000,000 of Protestants. Very few ecclesiastics, however, were enlightened enough to take this view of the case, and their opponents employed those weapons which, where an ignorant peasantry are concerned, the Papist priesthood know so well how to wield.

But the partisans of France did not confine themselves to threats; inducements in the shape of vague commercial advantages, and promises of railways, &c., were put prominently forth: Chablais was promised a railway along the southern shore of Lake Geneva, and Faucigny a railway to Sallenches. Then advantage was taken of a natural rivalry which exists between the two provinces, and it was said that, in the case of their becoming a Swiss canton, Chablais would be merged in its larger neighbour, and get bullied. In fact, my memory and my paper would alike fail me were I to endeavour to recount the devices, or specify the arguments, used to influence the peasantry in favour of France: one most transparent was the posting of placards telling them that it was useless to vote against France, because they already formed an integral part of the Empire. This was calculated to produce so serious an effect upon the rustic mind, which would immediately imagine, that whoever voted against France under these circumstances, would be guilty of an act of rebellion, that the Swiss party issued an opposition placard, the only one I observed at Bonneville. I have unfortunately lost the French placard, the nature of which, however, may be gathered from the following contradiction.

It will be observed that one of the inducements held out to become French was in the promise that the Savoyards in the Piedmontese army were to return home, no mention being made of a possible French conscription.

"CONCITOYENS.

"Des affiches mensongères viennent vous dire aujourd'hui, que

tout est terminé, et que notre pays est definitivement incorporé à l'Empire Français.

" On vous trompe audacieusement, et on calcule sur notre crédulité pour égarer vos votes.

" Le traité passé entre la France et la Sardaigne réserve aux grandes puissances, et à la Suisse, le sort definitif de la Savoie du Nord. Nous ajouterons que les dernières nouvelles reçues hier sont excellentes pour nous. Elles etablissent que les puissances de l'Europe, entre autres l'Angleterre et la Suisse, sont fermement resolues à empêcher l'annexion de notre pays à la France.

" C'est à nous aujourd'hui de montrer notre volonté, et de publier le choix que nous avons fait pour notre nouvelle patrie. Soyez certain qu'on respectera notre vote.

" Citoyens, et vous surtout propriétaires, artisans et habitants de la Campagne, notre sort est entre vos mains. On vous dit que les soldats Savoyards vont rentrer dans leur foyers.

" ERREUR ! MENSONGE !

" Vos frères, vos fils quitteront le Piémont ; ils reviendront en Savoie, mais pour être immediatement incorporés dans les régiments Français, et partir ensuite pour la Bretagne où la Normandie, si ce n'est pour l'Afrique ou l'Asie.

" Vous voterez pour la Suisse parceque ce n'est que là que vous pouvez trouver la liberté, le bien être, et l'affranchisement, de l'impôt de sang.

" Vous voterez pour M. Pierre Blanc, Avocat, parcequ'il est décidé à soutenir votre cause devant le Parlement.

" Dejà les colleges de Cluses et de Saint Jeoire ont donné une immense majorité aux candidats de notre choix. Que le collège de Bonneville suive leur exemple, et la patrie leur devra à tous sa prosperité et son bonheur.

" *Vive la Suisse !* "

This placard, which was rendered absolutely necessary to contradict the false statements contained in those posted up by the French party, was the only one to be seen in Bonneville. Nor had any facilities been given for conveying electors to the poll. The consequence was, that as most of these lived in distant valleys, they never made their appearance at all, and the townspeople had

it all their own way. Almost every peasant I spoke to had made an effort to come expressly to vote against France, although at the risk of compromising himself and offending the town authorities. The qualification of the voters was a one-pound annual rating, so that a comparatively large proportion of the peasantry were excluded. There can be not the slightest doubt that a vote taken throughout the communes of Faucigny and Chablais by universal suffrage, would even then, notwithstanding the influence which has been used, have given a large majority in favour of Switzerland. Had it been taken two months before, it would have been unanimous *against* France: when it was taken some weeks after, it was unanimously *in favour of* France. The dice were not thrown until they were properly loaded. The process of loading them was going on then, otherwise how can we account for the delay in appealing to the will of the people? The Emperor of France and the King of Sardinia had both solemnly promised the people of Savoy and Nice that their countries should not be transferred to France until after they had been consulted by a popular vote, yet both countries were occupied by French troops for a month prior to its being taken; French money was extensively distributed; French emissaries active. So far as Southern Savoy was concerned, its fate was sealed, and it is fair to say that a large section of the population was satisfied with that fate. But Northern Savoy was in a very different category. The whole of the peasantry *en masse* were in favour of Switzerland; the bourgeoisie, who are more divided, did not deny it; and a French agent with whom I conversed frankly admitted that the popular feeling was strongly in favour of Switzerland, but went on to say, "We do not care about feelings, we want results." How could it be supposed that a poor, ignorant, timid race of mountaineers, accustomed to implicit obedience to, and reverence for, authority, should apprehend so strange a fact as that they should be free to vote upon their own interests? It did not enter into imaginations trained under despotic influences, for their nominal freedom only dates back a few years. They asked what they were to do, and found the authorities and agents of two great powers—one of whom they were used to obey, and the other to dread—pushing in the same direction. You are either Piedmontese or French, said the political guides in whom they had always been accustomed

to trust. Whichever is the case, a vote for Switzerland must be one of rebellion. The only opposition which could be made to this overwhelming combination was offered by those of the bourgeoisie who were fearless and independent. These men had long odds to contend with, besides labouring under inexperience in election tactics, and the methods of popular agitation. No public meetings had been called in Northern Savoy, or widespread system of canvassing been organised. In the first place, the funds were wanting; and in the second, though so many favoured the cause, the number of those hardy and energetic enough to figure prominently and work zealously in it, was comparatively few. Nevertheless, nearly thirteen thousand of the inhabitants of the two provinces were found bold enough to sign a declaration in favour of Switzerland; and when it is remembered that many of them did so under the impression that they were committing an act of presumption which bordered on rebellion, they deserve all credit for so fearless a demonstration. It is, however, to the untiring exertions of those patriotic and courageous men, MM. Bard, Bétémps, and Faurax, that the success of this manifestation is principally due. The delicate position in which the people were necessarily placed with reference to their own Government, appears on the face of this document, the translation of which runs as follows: "The undersigned, residing in the commune of , province of , disturbed by the rumours which have been spread, and according to which Savoy will cease to form a part of the States of His Majesty the King of Sardinia, desire to confirm here the expression of their devotion to the King, and their desire not to see any alteration made in their union with the Sardinian Monarchy. But, on the other hand, and in a case where political reasons, of which they will not constitute themselves the judges, render a separation inevitable, they are convinced that their Sovereign will not dispose of his faithful subjects without their being allowed to declare their wishes upon a matter so important as their future destiny.

"In spite, therefore, of the sympathies which a great and glorious empire might awaken, they distinctly signify their desire to be reunited to the Swiss Confederation, with which they have long been bound by a community of interests and of sentiments, as well as by those relations of friendship of which they have received so many proofs." Here follow nearly 13,000 signatures, among which

Alpine travellers will be glad to recognise the well-known names of Balmat, Couttet, Favret, Simond, and many others famous in Chamounix, whose daring feats as guides to British tourists will have prepared us to find them in their right places in the day of need. To such men the notion of their own mountain becoming French was intolerable; they have not contented themselves with signing a protest against it, but are the only community throughout the whole of Northern and Southern Savoy who have returned a deputy in favour of Switzerland—M. Chenal. The Member for Sallenches, a town well known to the Swiss explorer, in the immediate neighbourhood of Chamounix, occupied, until the annexation took place, the proud position, in the Turin Chamber of Deputies, of being the sole representative of Savoyard freedom. His was the only protest made against that outrage to the feelings of the loyal and devoted people, who have been sacrificed to "an idea." Will it be considered a piece of very egregious vanity on our part if we attribute this result, to some extent, to that close and intimate contact with our own countrymen, into which a great proportion of the small number of voters have been thrown, and which must have familiarised them with an independence of thought and action unknown amongst Continental nations? Whether this be so or not, the valley of Chamounix alone ventured on the decided demonstration of returning a member in favour of annexation to the Swiss Confederation; and surely, now that it has become French, its natives are entitled to the sympathy of every Englishman who has ever wandered, under their guidance, beneath the shadow of Mont Blanc.

## IV.

### DISMEMBERMENT OF SAVOY.

I WAS rather struck with the apparent calm and security which pervaded the French camp at Bonneville, for I saw something of both sides; and after in vain looking for popular excitement, I found a resting-place in the bosom of a political clique. It consisted of partisans of Swiss annexation, who were nevertheless on

most cordial and amicable terms with the enemy. We met in cafés, and pledged each other in Vermouth over sloppy tables. We jocosely asked Frenchmen whether they were meeting with much success, and they replied good-humouredly that we should know by the voting. We asked renegade Savoyards what they sold their consciences for, and they only smiled blandly. The quantity of insulting insinuations which one of my Savoyard companions heaped upon his opponents in a strain of facetious irony, would have led to his extermination under ordinary circumstances. As it was, the French only laughed, for they were probably paid by the job, and success was certain, and the Savoyards pocketed the insults with their dollars.

As is often the case, those who had been bold enough to compromise themselves decidedly, were recklessly imprudent in their language, and expressed themselves about France in terms calculated to make a more cautious countryman shudder. The only satisfaction left them was to go about frightening timid men by the violence of their opinions; they addressed groups of electors, and swaggered about till dinner-time, when we all went and toasted Freedom, coupled with the names of England and Switzerland, in bad champagne. While doing so we heard the drum beating the second *appel*, but we heeded not; either my companions thought the day irretrievably lost, or the champagne unusually good. Poor fellows! they had worked hard latterly, and had nothing left now but to kill care by conviviality. They were painfully conscious of the utter worthlessness of their efforts as opposed to the weight and prestige of a kingdom and an empire, both working for the same end, and pressing upon both flanks of a mountain district containing little more than 150,000 souls. Unless moral aid was afforded them from without, it was clear that they must yield to external pressure. The only nation in a position to supply this assistance, and offer this encouragement, was Switzerland; and it is due to that courageous and high-spirited republic to say that she was prepared to throw herself into the breach if she had been able to rely upon the support of the British Government. There was a moment when, if that support had been freely given, Faucigny and Chablais would have become Swiss instead of French. Those who have watched the Imperial policy must admit that a war at this juncture would have been fatal to it. A war with

England, involving the independence of Switzerland, would have given an opportunity to Austria to regain Lombardy, and brought Prussia down on the Rhine. To have risked the objects gained by the late Italian campaign, and to have arrayed three of the great European Powers against France, for the sake of Northern Savoy, just at a time when the army was exhausted and the exchequer deficient, would have been preposterous. The Emperor saw the danger, and at once offered to yield Chablais and Faucigny to Switzerland. Had those provinces been occupied by the Federal troops, as proposed by the Swiss Government, in accordance with their treaty-right, there can be little doubt that they would have remained in them up to this moment. Unfortunately, the representations of our Government induced the Federal Council to abandon this course; and the Emperor, perceiving that Switzerland was to be left to fight its own battle, discovered "that there was such a strong disinclination, and repugnance even, evinced by Faucigny and Chablais to being parted from the rest of Savoy, that he was reluctantly compelled to relinquish the idea of ceding them to Switzerland." We might perhaps have been justified, considering the European importance of this question, the great interests at stake, and our own treaty-obligations with reference to the neutralised territory, in examining into the correctness of this statement. The result of my own observations in Northern Savoy would lead me to give it an unqualified denial.

I am not prepared to say what the feelings of Southern Savoy may be upon the subject. It is just possible that persons who have thrown off one nationality, and adopted another, with the same facility with which a man would change his coat, nor felt a twinge of sentiment at abandoning a dynasty which had its birthplace in their mountains—it is, I say, just possible that people who have thus disregarded all considerations of nationality and race, should be sentimental upon the subject of Faucigny and Chablais. If so, their affections are entirely unrequited, for neither Faucigny nor Chablais feel the slightest reciprocity of sentiment. There is very little sympathy and very little intercourse between Northern and Southern Savoy. Their interests, like their rivers, flow in totally different directions. A natural boundary of almost impassable mountains, extending from Mont Blanc to La Roche, traversed only by difficult paths, separates them. Whatever a

deputation from Southern Savoy may have been instructed, after their arrival in Paris, to say upon this subject, a deputation from Northern Savoy, left to speak their minds freely, would have represented the matter in a very different light.

It may perhaps be shown that Southern Savoy, with a frontier conterminous with France, and all its means of communication leading into French markets, has interests so closely connected with that country, as to make its annexation to it commercially beneficial. Such is not the case with Northern Savoy. Its frontier is not conterminous with France; its markets are not in France; its commercial interests are actually injured by annexation to France. Every argument which a Southern Savoyard can bring in favour of the annexation of his province to France, the Northern Savoyard can, with much greater force, apply in favour of the union of his province to Switzerland.

He can, moreover, show that he would pay more, both in direct and indirect taxation, derive no advantages, and suffer in every material interest, by annexation to France.

This is not mere assertion, but may be statistically demonstrated, if the reader has the patience to glance at the following results; the process by which they have been arrived at will be found in the admirable pamphlet of M. Bard, himself a native of Faucigny. All his calculations have been based upon the official revenue returns for this province. It contains a population of 94,000 inhabitants. By reference to the statistics of the provincial treasury, we find that it actually paid to the central government of Sardinia an annual sum of 1,951,736 fr. of direct taxation. If transferred to France, it would pay an annual sum of 2,755,536 fr. If it became Swiss, its annual taxation would be 967,656 fr. Thus it would, in this latter case, pay nearly one million less than it does at present, and nearly two millions less than if it became French. Besides this, it would have the advantage of employing at home the greater part of that taxation, which in both other cases finds its way into the coffers of the Imperial treasury.

Then the connection with great empires involves serious obligations in the way of indirect imposts. Mons. Bard does not fail to point them out:—

"Piedmont is ambitious," he says; "after one crown she would like another—then, after this one, still another. The *gourmet*

knows how many leaves there are in an artichoke. Therefore she must have a standing army. France makes war for an idea. Now, as there are ideas of all colours, and she has only one of them, France must fight always and everywhere. Therefore she must have a standing army. Now, would you know what the taste of Piedmont for the artichoke and the worship by France of an idea would cost Faucigny in the shape of an indirect war-tax? —here are the figures." The dry calculations to which we are ushered by this humorous prelude, give as the cost to Faucigny of a standing army over Swiss militia as being 721,000 francs in time of peace. What it may be in time of war, or how often, when annexed to France, it may be a time of war, he does not venture to conjecture. But it is not merely the amount of capital drawn from a province which should be considered in the effects produced by its taxation, but the mode in which its taxes are employed. Properly speaking, taxes ought merely to be considered as an investment placed out at interest for the benefit of the country taxed. Mons. Bard draws the following comparisons:—

"In France, as in Sardinia, one-third of the revenue of the State is consecrated to the maintenance of the army, to the war-budget in the time of peace. It is about 50,000,000 for Sardinia, more than 500,000,000 for France. Interest on this investment, *fumée, fanfares, cadavres.* In Switzerland there is scarcely any war account. They prefer there the noise of the workshop, the life of industry, the song of the labourer. In France, as in Sardinia, a large proportion of the floating surplus is consecrated to State ceremonies—to the *frais de representation* of prefects and new governors, which the Ratazzi government supplied us with. Interests of this investment, *festins, parfums, bals, sourires de femmes.* In Switzerland nothing is allowed for *frais de representation.* People there are simple enough to believe that a magistrate is seen to most advantage when at work."

But while in France, as in Sardinia, a third of the revenues are absorbed in the military estimates, in Switzerland so little is thus appropriated, that Faucigny, as a Swiss canton, would make an annual saving over Faucigny, as a Sardinian province, of 1,903,698 francs; and over Faucigny, as a French arrondissement, of 2,707,499 francs.

Tax-payers would also have the satisfaction of knowing that the

money went to the soldiers who were to defend them; for hitherto, according to treaty, in the event of a war the Sardinian troops were bound instantly to evacuate Faucigny and Chablais, and retire to a place of security beyond the mountains. So that the country to whose military chest these provinces contributed in time of peace deserted them in time of war; and the country to whose military chest they never contributed a farthing for their own protection, became in time of war the only country bound to protect them. The advantages of annexation to a country with a surplus instead of to one with a national debt of 3,422,000,000 are not overlooked, and the inconveniences of the new douane system I have already alluded to. There are other considerations which must appeal to the common sense of every man weighing the relative merits of a choice between France and Switzerland. Morally, politically, commercially, socially, pecuniarily, the interests of these provinces are with Switzerland; and I must say, for the credit of the inhabitants, that I never met a man of the country, even though a partisan of France, who did not admit it. Many of those who voted for France acknowledged that they did so from personal and not from patriotic motives.

All that has been said with reference to the advantages which Faucigny would derive from its annexation to Switzerland applies more strongly to Chablais, a province removed even more remotely from the French frontier, and containing a population of sixty thousand inhabitants, whose commercial intercourse must always be confined to the Canton de Vaud and Geneva. Instead of forming an integral portion of the Swiss republic, and entering it as an important canton, calculated to add strength to the Confederation while participating in its free institutions, these countries will now become an obscure and distant province of the French Empire, exposed to all the annoyances which must attend its unwieldy and unsubstantial greatness, without any of its glory. Like the shores of some mighty ocean beaten by the surge of its incessant waves, the extremities of a state like France feel the violence of every revolution and every war that agitates the country, but profit little from the calm when the storm is past.

# V.

## STRATEGICAL IMPORTANCE OF NORTHERN SAVOY.

HITHERTO I have considered the question of the annexation of Faucigny and Chablais to France from a local point of view; but it is evident, that however strongly we might, upon philanthropic grounds, regret the "manifest destiny" of these provinces, we should confine ourselves to offering them the very meagre consolation of our sympathy, did we not believe that our interests were to some extent involved in their transfer to our powerful and dangerous neighbour. A glance at the map will confirm this impression. A new kingdom is being formed in Italy; it will possess a standing army of at least two hundred thousand men. It will either remain as it is at this moment, a willing and servile slave to France, absolutely devoted to its ruler, in which case the French army becomes eight hundred thousand strong, and Italy continues to be a French province; or it will assert its independence, and its plains will then be open to invasion by the legions of France from the Simplon to the Cornice. Italy is now occupied with the toy procured for them with some trouble by the Emperor, but which he has reserved to himself the power to break at any moment. Deprived of all possibility of self-defence, she becomes not a valuable ally, but an irksome charge to any European power rash enough to burden itself with her friendship. She has got the shadow of liberty without the substance, for her fate is in another's hands. Her fetters are unlocked for the moment, but she has purchased her deliverance at the price of the key. Perhaps she was right. It is not for others to judge of the respective merits of the jailers. But had Nice and Northern Savoy been retained, Italian liberty would have been founded on a firmer basis. It might have prospered and strengthened, sheltered behind the rocky barrier which nature has interposed between Europe and the peninsula, as though expressly to guard it. In a strategical point of view, then, the possession of Faucigny and Chablais by France is fatal to the independence of Italy; and inasmuch as the independence of Italy

is of great importance to Europe, all Europe is interested in the fate of Faucigny and Chablais.

Every constitutional nation must desire to see Italy free. We all sympathise with Italian liberty, but French liberty—that is, liberty by the sufferance of France—is not so popular a development of the principle amongst us. But the political importance of Northern Savoy is not confined to Italy alone. Germany and Switzerland take an intense interest in the fate of this mountain district. If the guarantees under which their neutrality is provided for are thus set at naught, Switzerland, existing only by virtue of similar provisions, has no security for the future: these provinces are to Switzerland what the Principalities were to Turkey. Geneva is the Constantinople at which France is aiming; and when the whole southern shore of its lake becomes French, the lake itself ceases to be Swiss. A base of operations on Italy or Germany may be formed here, available equally as a "point de depart" in either direction. It is a strategical centre from which Italy and Switzerland may be retained within the grasp, while Germany is permanently menaced. As for the stipulation that the neutralised territory is to be held by France, only subject to the conditions under which it was held by Sardinia, and as to the plea that its neutrality was only established in favour of this latter country, the stipulation is about as valuable as the plea is sound. The object of neutralising this territory was to protect not merely Sardinia, but Switzerland; and indirectly not merely these two countries, but all Europe. It was very properly considered as the key to Italy; and Sardinia, as most nearly interested, was intrusted by Europe with this key. The object was to lock out the very power into whose hands it has now passed. A man who has determined to force a door open, is not likely to content himself with kicking at the panels when he has got the key in his pocket, even though he may have promised not to use it, particularly after having been put to enormous trouble and expense in getting hold of it. One fails to see the object of the sacrifices made to obtain possession of the neutralised territory, if its strategical advantages are never to be made any use of.

If it was worth the while of France not merely to engage in a costly war, but to incur the suspicion of Europe, for the sake of these provinces, surely it was the duty of Europe to resist any such

attempt, not only because it was unjust towards the populations whose liberties are being bartered, but because its own interests were at stake. Unhappily the whole matter has now gone by default. The time is past when our protests could be of any avail. So long as there was any danger anticipated from the opposition of this country, "the Emperor entirely disclaimed all intention of proceeding to make the annexation without consulting the great Powers." It was not until he was thoroughly convinced of the apathy of our own Government upon the Swiss question generally, that he ventured, in the face of his solemn assurances to the contrary, to annex these provinces in the most public manner, to the sounds of drums and *te deums*. So far from resenting this gross breach of faith, we have remained satisfied with the answer vouchsafed by Mons. Thouvenel to the representations of Lord Cowley, "that he thought he (Lord Cowley) was not very reasonable; that all the other Powers of Europe *seemed* to think that the despatches written by France were satisfactory on that point; and that the engagement had been fulfilled."

The humility which has lately characterised our diplomatic intercourse with the French Government, is only exceeded by the simplicity with which we confide in its representations. Poor Switzerland, whose only champion at present is a dove, if she has any hope that the 92d Article of the Treaty of Vienna, and the 2d Article of the Treaty of Turin are to be reconciled, must look elsewhere in Europe for the serpent.

## VI.

### OPENING OF THE CHAMBERS AT TURIN.

THE election of the deputies for the Turin Chamber having been concluded, I proceeded to Turin, in company with Mons. Chenal, the only deputy who was returned from Savoy as the representative of the cause of Swiss annexation.

The 2d of April was fixed for the opening of the Chambers of the first Italian Parliament, and as I passed through the gay and

crowded streets of Turin in anxious but fruitless search for a lodging, I was consoled for my want of success by the good fortune which enabled me to witness an incident pregnant with such deep importance to the future destinies of Italy. The Place du Chateau, picturesque at all times, was now decorated with festoons of many-coloured flags, waving over an excited crowd which swayed to and fro under the varying impulses of the day. Large stands full of bright flowers, triumphal arches gaily decorated, and balconies decked out in green, white, and red, crowded with ladies, were the chief accessories to the brilliant and animated scene; troops were marching, bands playing, people cheering, handkerchiefs fluttering, royalty bowing, and the bright sun shining over all. If the Italians only exhibit as much skill in working their new constitution, as they displayed taste in its inauguration, the young Italian kingdom may look forward to a happy and prosperous future. In the evening a brilliant illumination terminated the "spectacle," and three hundred senators went to bed to meditate upon the new responsibilities which devolved upon them—and perhaps to dream about the thorns which might possibly lie hidden among the roses that had strewn the path to the councils of their country. The following ten days were occupied in constituting the house. The verification of the returns, the election of President, Vice-President, and other office-bearers, were necessary but very uninteresting formalities, and it was not until the 12th that the first debate took place upon a motion of General Garibaldi, which had for its object the postponement of the vote by universal suffrage at Nice, until after the treaty of the 24th March had been ratified by the Italian legislature.

In order to a thorough appreciation of the importance of the discussion which this motion gave rise to, as well as of the vote arrived at, it will be necessary to advert shortly to the events with which many are probably familiar, but which can alone account for, though they do not justify, the course pursued by the Sardinian Government with reference to the annexations of Savoy and Nice. The arrangement come to and signed at Plombières in August 1858, between the Emperor and Count Cavour, is now a matter of notoriety. The terms are well known to the public. It was then agreed, that although no definite ground of quarrel existed between France and Austria, still, that in the commence-

ment of the ensuing year that unhappy Empire should be despoiled of two of its provinces, and that, in consideration of this act of violence and wrong, the Emperor should be rewarded by the cession of Savoy and Nice to France. It is evident that the principle which has been introduced by the agreement at Plombières, if it be allowed to obtain generally, must be fatal to the peace of Europe.

It is a monstrous doctrine that two or three of the great Powers of Europe are to be allowed to conspire together, and then, without a moment's warning, to make a sudden onslaught upon some unsuspecting empire, upon the plea that it is mal-administering the affairs of one of its own provinces.

Russia, no doubt, at this moment sympathises with what it may choose to consider the wrongs which are suffered by our Indian subjects; the grievances of the Ionian Islands are notorious in Europe; but a secret combination of European powers formed to free these "enslaved and oppressed populations" would seem a gross and wanton outrage upon international propriety. Yet the Government and the great majority of the public of this country have not been ashamed to sympathise with an act of violence plotted in secret, and which, if practised towards themselves, would have been regarded as nothing short of treachery. There is doubtless a sacred right inherent in every conquered people, to throw off the yoke upon any favourable opportunity. We cannot constitute ourselves the judges between British and Austrian mal-administration; the conquered race is the sole judge; and freedom is not the less freedom because it is escape from the British instead of the Austrian rule. Still we should very much question the right of interference on the part of other nations, and invoke loudly the doctrine of non-intervention which we are ourselves so slow to practise.

The Plombières conspirators having completed their programme, the necessary insult was offered to the Austrian Ambassador on the first day of the ensuing year; while in order the more effectually to hoodwink our Government, pretended negotiations were entered into with it, ostensibly to enlist its good offices as mediator. At the time, upon the solemn assurances of Mons. Walewski, our Ambassador in Paris positively informed the Government that

the Emperor had no intention of going to war with Austria. The activity with which military preparations were being carried forward, left no doubt in the mind of the public of the fallacy of this statement, and the consciousness that a war was inevitable, induced Austria to precipitate the campaign which terminated so disastrously to her arms at Solferino. The necessity under which the Emperor felt himself of concluding a peace at Villafranca, before he had fulfilled that part of the Plombières agreement by which Venetia as well as Lombardy was to be transferred to Sardinia, caused a temporary estrangement between those who had been parties to it, and led to the resignation of Count Cavour. An attempted compromise was soon after proposed, by which the duchies were to be in a manner substituted for Venetia; but the scheme did not seem to promise well, more especially as the attitude of Tuscany and the Romagna was such as to inspire the Italian party with larger hopes.

For a moment the Italians seemed to be getting the best of the game; and Cavour went to Geneva to incite the population of Savoy against French annexation, and proclaimed with more sincerity than he got credit for, that Sardinia had no intention of abandoning Savoy and Nice. About the same time Mons. Pietri, a French agent of police, proceeded to Nice to sound the temper of the populations upon the subject of French annexation; and Mons. Walewski solemnly declared that the question of the annexation of these provinces, if it had ever been entertained, was now entirely abandoned. Count Cavour's mission to Paris, and his return to office, once more gave the two Governments an opportunity of coming to a definite understanding upon the much-vexed question; and it was finally arranged that Savoy and Nice should be ceded to France, after the populations had been "consulted;" and that Tuscany and the Romagna should also, in accordance with the same popular voice, be annexed to Sardinia, the autonomy of the former country being, however, preserved for a year.

# VII.

## GARIBALDI'S MOTION.

THE treaty of the 24th of March was the result of the negotiations above alluded to; and it was with reference to one of its stipulations under which the popular vote was to be taken in Savoy and Nice, that the debate at which I was present occurred. The occasion was one of sufficient interest and importance to insure a full house, and attract a large non-official audience. The galleries were crammed with spectators, and scarcely a vacant seat was to be discovered in the body of the chamber, which, though hardly large enough to accommodate the recent accession to the number of deputies, had been tastefully and comfortably fitted up.

The constitutional point upon which General Garibaldi, who opened the discussion, insisted, was one which did not seem to admit of a moment's controversy. By the fifth Article of the Constitution it is provided that "Treaties which shall make any alteration in the territories of the State, shall not take effect until after they shall have obtained the consent of the Chamber." The very reasonable request preferred by the deputies who represented the town and county of Nice in the Turin Chamber was, that the popular vote should not be taken until after the Treaty, by virtue of which the people were entitled to vote at all, had been submitted to Parliament. A somewhat parallel case to that which now occupied the House would be afforded, if our own Sovereign concluded a treaty with the Emperor transferring Ireland to France, allowed French garrisons to be substituted for British throughout the island, handed over the appointment of all the local authorities to the French Government, and then called upon the people to vote in obedience to orders, in defiance of a unanimous protest on the part of all the Irish members of Parliament, and without submitting the treaty to the House at all. If we stretch the analogy a point farther, and imagine the Duke of Wellington to have just returned from fighting and winning the battles of his country, to find himself, on his arrival, rewarded by a grateful Government by being converted into a Frenchman, we may form some notion of the sen-

timents which animated Garibaldi, when he rose to enter an indignant protest against the unjustifiable course that the Government were adopting with reference to the country of which he was a native. The simple and straightforward speech of the honest soldier was followed by the stirring eloquence of Melana, and the racy description of Robaudi of the means of coercion employed at Nice—of which place these gentlemen were the representatives. The galleries, crowded with spectators, could not repress the expression of their sympathies with the cause advocated by these men, and, in defiance of the privileges of the House, burst forth in such unanimous and hearty cheers that the Speaker was obliged to interpose, and threaten them with expulsion. The greater majority of the members who afterwards voted with the Government were inconsistent enough to be as demonstrative as the galleries, so warmly did the Nice deputies appeal to the patriotic sentiments of every man present. The embarrassed aspect presented by the "Treasury Bench" during this debate was sufficiently remarkable; and the speech of Count Cavour, in justification of the course adopted by the Government, fell like lead upon the unsympathetic ears of the greater portion of the audience. It was impossible to defend that course upon constitutional grounds, and Farini, Mamiani, and other members of the Government who addressed the House, confined themselves rather to appealing to its indulgence, than to refuting the constitutional arguments adduced on the other side. "Upon political grounds," said Count Cavour, "I confine myself to this simple declaration, that both I and my colleagues are firmly convinced that the cession of Nice and of Savoy are conditions essential to the prosecution of that policy which, within so short a time, has conducted us to Milan, Florence, and Bologna." While Mamiani, with even more frankness, declared that "in times of such difficulty it was inopportune to discuss legal subtleties, and that, therefore, under the present circumstances of political necessity, he begged to recommend resignation."

It is only fair to say that this rather questionable sentiment was received with murmurs of dissent by the gods above, who take very much the same interest in the proceedings of their Chamber, that the galleries of a London theatre do in the stage performance; but it did not the less express, in a sentence, the attitude of the Government to which the speaker belonged. Resignation to the Imperial

will is the characteristic feature of Sardinian policy at present, if a Government which only acts in obedience to foreign dictation can be said to have a policy at all.

Victor Emmanuel is a French Viceroy, with all the inconveniences attendant upon a false position into the bargain, while Count Cavour might have received his appointment from the Tuileries. That Italian liberty which evoked such warm expressions of sympathy from the greater portion of the British public, is a curious study just now. It is defined by the word "resignation," a virtue for which Britons have not been in the habit hitherto of displaying much sympathy; while the sentiments of alarm and disgust enter largely into the feelings of those enjoying it;—alarm at the power to which they are resigned, and disgust at the thraldom in which they are held. Nor need we wonder at this when we remember that French troops have occupied Sardinia for a year after the treaty was concluded; and that although Tuscany and the Romagna expressed, by a popular vote, their determination to become Sardinian some months since, their annexation has not yet been recognised by the Emperor, who has, moreover, taken care to stipulate that the autonomy of Tuscany should be preserved for a year, so that this sword of Damocles will be suspended, at least for that period, over the head of the new Italian kingdom. With Austria, vindictive and powerful, still in possession of a portion of the country, and holding a dangerous strategical position; with the Pope outraged and desperate, organising an army which is attracting, like the hosts of the Crusaders, a large share of the chivalry and fanaticism of Europe; with France mercilessly grinding her into submission, Italy lies like a stricken deer in the clutches of a tiger, round which are prowling the jackals and the hyænas that have been scared away by their more formidable rival. Happy would it be for her if, in addition to the dangers which menace her from without, she could contemplate without anxiety the elements which compose her nationality. How far these are homogeneous will only appear when the pressure which now coerces into acquiescent submission her legislative bodies is removed. Then, perchance, we shall find that Lombardy, still smarting under the injustice of the Ratazzi administration, and groaning under a war-tax in addition to all those which existed under Austrian domination, and which have been retained, may give vent to her feelings, and that

the strong Radical spirit which characterises the province, and which the long continuance of Austrian rule has only served to foster and increase, will find an outlet; while the pride of the Tuscans, and the hot blood of the Romagnese, will introduce discordant elements into the councils of a nation endeavouring to prove its fitness for freedom to the world, and which, by way of a sample, has deliberately trampled upon constitutional rights under the plea of political necessity, and has voted rather in favour of "resignation" than of justice and of law.

No nation ever yet inaugurated its liberties by the sacrifice of its independence, or by the substitution of a servile and tortuous policy for a lofty and chivalrous adherence to honour and right; and a Parliament, whose first act has been to abandon its self-respect, waive its constitutional privileges, and yield up its dignity as a peace-offering to a foreign despot, is not likely to become distinguished as the type of constitutional government abroad, or to give satisfaction to the nation with whose destinies it is intrusted.

A Parliament which is composed of men who are not free themselves, and who do not represent free constituencies, is a mere shadow of a Parliament, and so long as it remains a shadow it will exist. This is the present condition of the Turin Chamber; the Government for the time being nominates its candidate for each constituency, and orders the syndics and the priests, who are in nine cases out of ten locally supreme, to return him. These men, whose hopes depend upon the Government, and who are not, as with us, political partisans—for parties worthy the name have not yet sprung into existence—obey orders, and the member comes up bound hand and foot to the Government which has returned him. As the external pressure is removed, and men begin to feel and know their rights, and as the uneducated boors who now exercise the franchise become politically educated, the shadow will turn into a substance; but a substance composed, as I have already described, of such combustible materials, that the chances are that it blows up. Meantime Count Cavour is a general of division, with his forces thoroughly well drilled; but the headquarters and the commander-in-chief are in Paris.

When the time comes, and the Italian regular army shall have reached its full complement of 200,000 men, the order will be

given to recover Venetia; and while the attention of Austria is fully absorbed by Italy on one flank, and by Hungary, which it is hoped may rise in rear, the Commander-in-chief will create a pleasing diversion on the Rhine, whereby Prussia will not only be prevented from coming to the rescue of Austria, but lose her own Rhenish provinces.

Meantime the simple-minded British public will go on sympathising with the enslaved populations of Venetia and Hungary, blindly confiding in the *bona fides* of the deliverer, who will in in fact be merely substituting his own despotism for that of Austria at the price of English preponderance. Do we feel quite certain that the day may not yet come, when the necessity of self-preservation will league Germany and England against France and Italy, and the muskets which we have subscribed for and sent to Garibaldi will be fired at those who paid for them? If we will persist in viewing the Emperor as the representative of political liberty on the Continent, we must pay the price of our infatuation, and he will continue to make merchandise of our sympathies to his own profit, until the gigantic swindle is exposed, and the base coin which he has passed under the name of freedom is acknowledged as a counterfeit.

The blot upon the table of the Imperial backgammon-board at this juncture is Rome. So long as a French army occupies the Holy City, the hands of the Commander-in-chief are tied in this direction: therefore it is that he has permitted General Lamoricière to accept the command of the Roman army, apparently in opposition to his wishes; while the known hostility of this distinguished man, who is doubtless acting from the highest motives, to the Imperial cause, gives a colour to the transaction; but, inasmuch as it is manifestly in the interest of France that Northern Italy should be entirely dependent upon her ally for protection, it is desirable that she should be surrounded with as many enemies as possible; and the withdrawal of the French army of occupation from Rome, and the substitution of a garrison hostile to Sardinia, and powerful enough to threaten the Romagna, is the object at which the Imperial policy is now specially directed. It was with this view that overtures were made some months ago to the King of Naples to replace the French army; but that Sovereign was sufficiently well advised not to allow the Emperor to force this card

from his hand, and he consequently declined the office with thanks. Thus the organisation by Lamoricière of a sufficient army to threaten Romagna will be an additional means of pressure supplied to the Emperor, who will then, in the event of the Sardinian Government showing symptoms of insubordination, threaten to withdraw his troops from Rome, and leave the New Kingdom exposed to "Papal aggression," just as he now occasionally threatens to withdraw his protection from Lombardy, and give it up to the tender mercies of Austria.

## VIII.

### OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION AT NICE.

THIS account of the present defenceless and prostrate condition of Italy has been rendered necessary in order to a thorough appreciation of the measures taken by the Sardinian Government, and which I am now about to describe, to secure a vote in Nice and Savoy in favour of France. The order came from headquarters that this vote was to be all but unanimous; and, inasmuch as the sympathies of the populations of Nice and Northern Savoy had already been manifested very decidedly in an opposite sense, it was an order which caused some little anxiety to the authorities at Turin. However, to hear there, is to obey; hence the vote in the Turin Chamber on Garibaldi's motion, which decided by a large majority in favour of a gross injustice, and a breach of the constitution. So strongly opposed were the popular sentiments as to the vote of the Chamber, that Garibaldi, on leaving it, was made the object of an ovation, and could scarcely show himself in the streets afterwards without some description of demonstration being made in his honour.

The sentiments of the people of Nice being very doubtful, and it being suspected by the Government that an intention existed, on the part of certain influential Nizzards, to work more systematically and energetically than they had done, in order to counteract the undue influences which had been brought to bear upon the voters, it was decided to anticipate the day of votation;

which had originally been fixed for the 22d April, that being the day of votation in Savoy. Where the training was so delicate, it was difficult to bring both provinces into condition exactly at the right moment; Nice had been slightly overworked, and delay might cause serious embarrassment. The day was therefore changed from the 22d to the 15th; and as I was desirous of witnessing the process, I determined to proceed thither, finding an additional inducement, in the prospect of the companionship of General Garibaldi, who was anxious to protest, by his personal presence and vote, against the iniquitous transfer of his native province. On our arrival at Genoa, however, the General was dissuaded from this project, and seduced by the prospect of more active, and, as has since proved, more important occupation in another part of Italy. The undertaking in which he is now engaged may open to him a more glorious field of success, though the cause can scarcely be more just than that which originally decided him in favour of proceeding to Nice.

Leaving Garibaldi the object of popular adulation at Genoa, I proceeded by the Cornice along the Riveira, and after a drive of twenty-four hours through that most beautiful piece of coast seenery, arrived, early on the morning of the 15th, in the town of Nice. Before proceeding to describe the actual process of voting, it is necessary that I should give some account of the preliminary measures employed by the Sardinian Government to insure a result in the right direction. I have already alluded to the determination which existed at Turin to obtain the popular vote in favour of France. So strongly opposed, however, were the inhabitants to the idea of becoming French, that they not only returned all their deputies to the Turin Chamber upon the express understanding that they were to protest against any such transfer to another power, but, upon the occasion of the French troops first entering Nice from Italy, received them so roughly, that the latter actually came into collision with the townspeople upon one occasion, and were compelled to use their bayonets, the proof of which was exhibited to me by a young man whose clothes had been pierced in the scuffle. When we remember the accounts in the French papers of the enthusiasm with which the French troops were received at Nice, we can form some estimate from this incident of the amount of truth which characterises their assertions generally. Matters being in this state, it was clear to those to whom the management of the uni-

versal suffrage vote was intrusted, that unless the influence of the Government authorities was brought to bear upon the people, the majority would vote according to the Italian sentiments they had hitherto lost no opportunity of expressing. The provisional governor, Lubonis, accordingly issued the following proclamation : " Citizens, —All uncertainty with reference to our future has ceased. By the treaty of the 24th of March the gallant King Victor Emmanuel has ceded to France Savoy and the arrondissement of Nice. The most powerful motives of political necessity, the exigencies of the future of Italy, the sentiment of gratitude towards his powerful ally, and, finally, the exceptional circumstances of our country, have decided, although with regret, our beloved Sovereign to separate the provinces which have been for so many centuries intimately bound up with his dynasty. But the fate of people does not rest exclusively with the desire of princes. Therefore, the magnanimous Emperor Napoleon the Third, and the loyal Victor Emmanuel, have desired that this treaty of cession should be strengthened (*fortifié*) by the popular adhesion. For this purpose you will ere long be convoked to the electoral committees, and his Majesty the King has unexpectedly confided to me the provisional government of this arrondissement in my quality of your fellow-citizen.

" Fellow-citizens,—At the august voice of the King, all incertitude as to your future has disappeared ; in the same way, at those august words, ought to disappear for the future all dissensions and rivalries. All the citizens should be animated by the same spirit of conciliation. All opposition should fall powerless before the interests of the country and the sentiment of duty. *Besides, it will find an insurmountable obstacle in the wishes themselves of Victor Emmanuel.* There is no longer any use in public demonstrations. Their only effect will be to compromise the public order, which will be for the future energetically protected. Confidence, tranquillity, and collectedness, ought to preside over the solemn act to which you are called.

" Fellow-citizens,—The mission which the King has just confided to me is transitory but important. In order to fulfil my task at this extraordinary juncture, I count upon the support of your co-operation, upon your respect for law, and upon the high degree of civilisation to which you have raised yourselves. Hasten, therefore, to confirm, by your suffrages, the *reunion* of your coun-

try to France. In rendering ourselves the echo of the intentions of the King, let us draw round the banner of that noble and great nation which has always excited our lively sympathies. Let us rally round the throne of the glorious Emperor Napoleon the Third. Let us surround it with the same fidelity, so especial to our country, which we have always preserved up to this day to Victor Emmanuel. As for this august Prince, let us retain among us the worship for bygone memories, and let us raise earnest prayers for his new and brilliant destiny.

"As for the great Napoleon the Third, whose powerful and firm will is to open a new era of prosperity for our country, our inflexible fidelity will now commence, and our respectful devotion.

"Vive la France!
"Vive L'Empereur Napoleon III.!

"*Le Gouverneur Provisoire,*
LUBONIS."

Considering that this worthy was a Sardinian, this production would simply be considered an act of high treason in any civilised country; for although the governor alludes to the civilisation to which the people have raised themselves, their tame submission to oppression and injustice seems scarcely to justify the compliment. There is a *naïveté* in his reference made to the *desire* of the magnanimous Emperor Napoleon and the loyal Victor Emmanuel, that this treaty of cession should be strengthened by (not depend upon) the popular adhesion, a frankness in his declaration that any opposition to it would meet with an insurmountable obstacle in the wishes of the King of Sardinia, and an inconsistency in his appeal to their former fidelity to their sovereign, which is now to lead them to transfer it instantly and inflexibly to another, which proves the diplomatic qualification of the writer for the post to which the Turin Ministry had appointed him; while in the gentle hint contained in his allusion to the "firm and powerful will of the Emperor" is concealed a menace which could not fail to produce an effect upon those for whom it was intended.

Some skill was shown in making the provisional appointments rendered necessary by the unwillingness of some of the old employés to perform the unworthy functions assigned to them. Thus

Lubonis, a lawyer by profession, was especially selected as a fitting and unscrupulous instrument on the resignation of the regular governor; while, on the other hand, the syndic Malaussena was retained in consequence of the readiness he exhibited to sacrifice his principle to his interest; when it is remembered that this gentleman was president of the junta which sent a vote of thanks, only a few weeks before, to Sir Robert Peel, Mr Kinglake, and other members of the House of Commons, for their advocacy of the cause of Nice as *against* French annexation, the following proclamation will be the better appreciated :—

"Fellow-citizens,—You are called upon to accomplish an act which will mark a memorable epoch in your annals. Upon the 15th and 16th of this month, the urns of universal suffrage will be open to you to confirm (*constater*) your wish upon the annexation of France. At so solemn a moment the voice of your first municipal magistrate should not remain silent. He is bound alike by honour and duty to declare to you frankly, openly, the course which his conscience and the public interest compel him to follow. The duties which her history and the traditions of her ancient fidelity have imposed upon her, Nice has nobly fulfilled. In presence of the treaty of the 24th March, in presence of the proclamation of our beloved King, of the 1st of April, all those who really love their country, all those who are sincerely devoted to the King and to the Italian cause, can have but one idea, but one object. It is, that the will of the two sovereigns, accepted by the free consent of the people, should encounter no difficulty, no obstacle; it is, that its frank and loyal execution should tighten in an indissoluble manner the bonds of the alliance of the two great nations upon which repose the future and the hopes of Italy.

"Let us, therefore, collect round the urns with calmness and dignity; let us be united by the spirit of an enlightened and conciliatory patriotism; let nothing arrest the free expression of our wishes; but let each of us, in giving up his vote, think what he owes to his country, to France, and to the Emperor.

"Vive la France!—Vive l'Empereur!

"MALAUSSENA,
*Syndic of the City.*

"*Given at the Hotel de Ville,*
*8th April* 1860."

How, in the face of such a proclamation, nothing is to arrest the free expression of the wishes of a people accustomed implicitly to obey their authorities, it would require a conscience as enlightened as that of the syndic to comprehend. But it is rather singular that, while the governor should talk of French annexation as a glorious prospect for Nice, the syndic should allude to it as a sacrifice made for the sake of Italy. At all events, the governor evinces a greater knowledge of human nature in his appeal rather to the pockets than the patriotism of the Nice public.

In addition to these two proclamations was a third issued by the bishop in the same sense, making it a case of conscience for any person to vote against French annexation. Not only was it prohibited by the authorities to hold any public meetings to discuss the affairs of Nice, but no canvassing on the part of those opposed to French annexation was permitted, or placards or circulars allowed to be issued by the Italian party. No such restriction, however, applied to those of an opposite character; and the following circular, bearing the Government stamp, was issued by the French committee, and sent, under official sanction, to the various authorities and influential persons both in town and country: "The annexation of the country of Nice to France will not be a *fait accompli* until after the favourable vote of the populations. Already all the measures necessary to secure the success of the votation have been taken by the Sardinian and French Governments. All the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, as well as all the employés and *chefs d'administration*, have been invited to favour, in every possible way, and in the French sense, the votation which is immediately about to take place. Thus, M. ——, on the eve of seeing our most cherished hopes realised, it behoves all the partisans of France to use all their influence with the populations, and to unite their efforts in order that the result of the vote should be a striking proof of the French sympathies of the country, and of its entire adhesion to the great act of reparation so long expected. We are convinced that the Imperial Government will recompense the populations for the unanimity of their vote, and will proportion the reward according to the good disposition manifested by them.

"Without enumerating here the immense and incontestable advantages of every kind which our country should derive from

its annexation to the great French nation, we consider it a duty to address ourselves to all our friends and correspondents, not only to stimulate their zeal in favour of the common cause, and to engage them to use all their influence in order to ensure the success of the vote in the French sense, but also that they should carefully watch and point out to us the steps which may have been taken in a contrary sense by those in opposition, in order that the necessary measures may be taken to neutralise the influences which are hostile to the interests of the country. Will you have the goodness, M. ——, in acknowledging the receipt of this, to make known to us the spirit of your population, and that of the local authorities? and believe us your devoted servants."

The necessary measures here alluded to were threats and bribes, the pecuniary resources of both Governments having been placed at the disposal of the provisional authorities for the latter purpose. It was estimated by those who had opportunities of judging, that £120,000 was spent in this manner; but this does not include the expenses of the days of votation, when the country voters lived at the cost of the Government; a tri-coloured cockade, or a voting ticket, with "*oui*" upon it, being equivalent to a free order at the cafés and drinking-booths, specially erected for the purpose. One inebriated voter did indeed vote a "*bon de pain*," or order for bread, instead of his voting ticket, which was discovered on the opening of the urns at the scrutiny, to the great amusement of the spectators.

When it is remembered that, in addition to the pressure exercised upon the docile population by means of these proclamations, the Sardinian troops were withdrawn, and the citizens of Nice saw their barracks occupied by French soldiers, who mounted guard everywhere; when they saw two French men-of-war steam into, and take up their berths in, the harbour of Villafranca; when they were assured by the clergy, whom they were accustomed to respect; by the authorities, whom they were accustomed to obey; and by the police, whom they were accustomed to fear, that any demonstration in the opposition sense would lead to the ultimate punishment of the individual,—we can scarcely wonder at the result when the day of votation arrived; but we may wonder at the conduct of the Sardinian Government, in the face of the first article of the treaty of the 24th March, which declares, that

"it is understood between their Majesties that this reunion shall be effected without any constraint upon the will of the people, and that the Government of the King of Sardinia and the Emperor of the French will agree, as soon as possible, upon the best means to arrive at and to confirm the manifestation of this will." I certainly did wonder when I saw the streets of Nice, on the day of the vote, swarming with French soldiers, and I recalled to mind the official answer given by the King to the Nice deputation, in which his Majesty stated, "that he had stipulated, as a condition of this cession, a votation free from any external pressure, and promised that, if a military occupation took place, or if the condition was violated in any other manner, he *would protest;*" and again, in his proclamation releasing his Savoy and Nice subjects from their allegiance, his Majesty reiterates this assurance: "Under no circumstances will this great change in your fate be imposed upon you; it must be the result of your FREE CONSENT. Such is my firm determination; such also is the intention of the Emperor of the French."

The words of Count Cavour in answer to Garibaldi in the Chamber of Deputies seemed still ringing in my ears: "With reference to the vote, I think I can assure the Chamber that this will be entirely free (*pienamente libero*)." And he went on to say, that the same system would be adopted at Nice and Savoy which had already been put in practice in the Æmilia and in Tuscany. If this be really the case, the new Italian kingdom is founded upon the sand.

## IX.

### THE BALLOT.

I HAVE already alluded to the appointment of the Governor Lubonis. The "Government Councillor," also specially chosen, was a M. Auguste Gal, the only single member of the municipal council who, on the occasion of an address expressive of loyalty and devotion being presented to the King of Sardinia, had, with

more consistency than his colleague the syndic, refused to sign it. The post of "Government Councillor" was the reward of this act of loyalty. The other provisional appointment was a M. Prosper Girard, well known for his ultra-French sympathies, who was selected to fill the post of vice-governor. Both these gentlemen were oil-merchants, and deeply interested, on mercantile grounds, in the annexation of Nice to France. Though ostensibly appointed by the Government, they were said to be really the nominees of M. Pietri, the French agent of police, who had originally visited Nice in August last, and was now, after having paid a visit to Turin, openly directing the government of the town and county of Nice, and making the necessary arrangements to secure the French vote. The governor and town-council made no secret about repairing daily to this indefatigable and able French official, to receive instructions. Deputations from all classes waited upon him without concealment, and he as frankly promised to carry out every request, in consideration of their voting in the right way. He was there, he said, to learn the wishes of the population, and to assure them that, if they became French, the Emperor would meet their wishes.

This dexterous but withal amiable and agreeable policeman was supported by a body of *mouchards* or detectives, roughly estimated at five hundred, besides numerous other agents who were disseminated over the country, and kept him *au courant* of every movement. He deserves the greatest credit for the untiring energy he displayed in the cause of his Imperial master, both in his management of the decorations of the town and the popular demonstrations. Considering the great difficulties he had to contend with, the general scenic effect was better than could have been expected. The only mistake committed was in not allowing more than eleven dissentient votes to be placed in the urns. It would have given a greater air of plausibility to the transaction, in a place where almost everybody had voted in the opposite sense on the occasion of the election of their deputies three weeks before, to have allowed it to be supposed that there were more than eleven righteous men in Nice. It would have removed it further from the category of those cities of the plain which did not contain even ten. Almost every day the papers contained some notice of the answers given to the various deputations which were sent up to

M. Pietri, in most cases, I was assured, at his own instigation. One illustration will serve as a specimen, extracted from the *Avenir de Nice* (the French organ): "The deputation of workmen and workwomen of the tobacco manufactory was presented yesterday by M. le Chev. Torrini, formerly employed in that manufacture, and by the Abbé Mari, curate of the port. Their object was to ask M. Pietri if it was the intention of the French Government to preserve the manufacture of tobacco at Nice, which they had been told was to be suppressed. M. Pietri received them with great affability, and gave them the assurance that not only would the manufacture of tobacco be maintained, but that a considerable development would be given to it; moreover, that the wages, both of the men and women, would be augmented, as well as their retiring pension, as in the various French manufactories. The visitors were extremely satisfied with this reception, and withdrew shouting 'Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!'" Considering that the deputation consisted only of five persons, their cheers must have been feeble; but this circumstance, as well as that they subsequently denied, in the *Gazette de Nice*, that they had been sent either by their fellow-workmen or their employers, are facts omitted in the French account.

The proclamation convoking the electors and fixing the day of votation, only allowed five days' notice for the registration of the voters. The electoral lists were in fact made, published, and declared valid in less than five days. This, to those who know the country, and the difficulty of intercommunication, was an evident mockery—the object was to carry the thing by a *coup-de-main*. The Italian party not allowed to canvass, to hold meetings, or issue circulars, were, in the face of this sudden manœuvre, rendered utterly powerless. Inasmuch as, constitutionally, the local governor had no right to call upon the people to vote themselves subjects of a foreign power without the sanction of the legislature, they did not anticipate so barefaced a breach of the law, and were completely taken by surprise. Meantime the central annexationist committee, upon whose proceedings no restrictions were placed, issued the following circular: "Sir,—The central annexationist committee has named you member of the special committee for the parish of ——. Will you have the goodness, sir, to concert with your colleagues, Messrs ——,

measures which may unite and bring to the poll on Sunday next the greatest possible number of electors, and take any steps which appear expedient, in order that the vote of the population of Nice may be at the same time a striking manifestation (*éclatante manifestation*) of its sentiments towards France and the Emperor?" As the day of the vote approached, the pressure put upon the population increased—rumours were current that lists of *proscrits* had already been made out. The cantonniers, or rural police authorities, did not hesitate to say that those who abstained from voting would be punished as soon as they became French subjects, while they received orders from headquarters at Nice to collect the peasants upon the day of voting, and march them in procession into the town, with drums beating and French flags waving at their head. Accustomed, as the ignorant population of the country were, to show implicit obedience to these authorities, their condition very much resembled that of the French regiment who, under the liberal institutions of the country, were called upon to give a vote by yes or no. The colonel having formed his regiment, thus addressed them: "Soldiers! Opinions are free—those among you in favour of 'yes,' will present arms. Attention to the word of command! Carry arms! Present arms!—Result—carried unanimously!"

The first object which met my view, as I entered Nice on the morning of Sunday the 15th, was a procession of country people, thus well drilled, marching into the town. At the head of the procession was a fat *curé*, arm-in-arm with the village syndic and another local functionary; behind were thirty or forty rustics, some of them extremely drunk, although early in the morning, carrying flags, beating drums, and cheering in a maudlin, irregular manner. The streets were crowded with persons wearing tri-coloured cockades, and carrying the *oui* voting ticket stuck prominently in their hats. French soldiers, of whom there was a plentiful sprinkling, mingled freely with the crowd, although one battalion had been marched to Villafranca, distant two or three miles, to give the authorities an opportunity of saying that, in order not to influence the vote, part of the French troops had left the town. A more serious moral effect upon the population had been created by the withdrawal, some time before, of the Sardinian troops than by the presence of the French. It was a singular

circumstance that the members of the National Guard who were on guard at the poll, had been selected, not in the regular manner, but by their known sympathies. The urns were placed in the National College, and thither I repaired to watch the process of voting. The people crowded in and voted with scarcely a challenge; lists of those registered were posted up outside; but at first the votes were given too rapidly to enable the scrutineers to exercise any check. The *oui* ticket was distributed freely in the streets—men stood at the corners of them as if they were advertising quack medicines, and gave you any number of "ouis;" but I endeavoured, both in the shops and in the streets, to procure a *non*, without success.

One boor I saw just about to vote two tickets. I asked him if such was his intention, and he naïvely answered, "Why not?" "Oh," I said, "it won't be fair; give me one," which he most good-naturedly did at once. Another man to whom I spoke told me that he was strongly opposed to becoming French—that he had two sons in the Sardinian service, one in the army and the other in the navy—that he himself was a poor boatman, and that he had voted *oui* against his inclination, because the police had told him that if he did not he would be imprisoned—that the King, whom he loved, wanted it—that England and all the Powers wanted it—and that as for his voting in the opposite sense he would simply get himself into a scrape and do no good. "But," he said, proudly, "I have neither cheered, nor will I wear a cockade." As all the scrutineers were the nominees of Pietri, and as they held the keys of the urns, there was, of course, no security against any number of *oui* tickets being put into them in private; while instances came to my knowledge of persons not only voting two tickets at a time, but voting twice. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the majority of the votes had been already deposited, and the rest of the day was devoted to drunken and noisy demonstrations, proceeding principally from the country people. These paraded the streets in gangs, singing, yelling, and reeling about, no payment being required for strong drinks; while sleek priests either walked in front or smiled bland encouragement upon their intoxicated congregations. It is worthy of note that, by becoming French, the salaries of these spiritual men will be considerably augmented. Crowds of citizens lined the streets, who, however,

for the most part, abstained from any symptom of demonstration, and regarded, in sullen silence, the degrading spectacle which their town presented. Not a handkerchief waved from a female hand, or a real, hearty, soul-stirring cheer was to be heard. Fifes, drums, and songs composed the chief part of the enthusiasm, and when the *vivas* did come, they were feeble and irregular. One of the strongest demonstrations at which I was present, took place in front of the hotel occupied by M. Pietri, when that affable Corsican appeared upon the balcony, and smiled upon the rabble. I am aware that upon such occasions as these it is difficult to form a general estimate of the sentiments of a population ; and there were persons at Nice who gave the people credit for a greater amount of unanimity in favour of France than I did. It is safer to judge by facts than by appearances ; and if such be the case, I would ask, Why were those candidates who were opposed to French annexation recently returned to the Turin Parliament? Why were the French troops hissed on their first arrival at Nice, and obliged to use their bayonets? Why did the municipal junta send a vote of thanks to those members of the English Parliament who opposed French annexation? Why did the French Consul, only three weeks before, represent to his Government that if a French man-of-war did not come to Villafranca, his own life and that of his wife and family would be endangered? Why was the editor of the *Avenir de Nice* (French organ) besieged in his house, and obliged to rush down to Villafranca to the said ship, when it came, for refuge? Why have large sums been spent in bribery? Why was the vote hurried? Why did the crowds who lined the streets remain silent, while the peasants and French agents paraded them? Where were the bouquets and waving handkerchiefs of feminine demonstrators, which always accompany the ebullition of popular feeling in Italy, instead of which the Nice ladies openly avowed, to the shame of their lords, that if the suffrage had been extended to them they would have had the pluck to say *no?* Why, finally, if the feeling was so unanimous, was it necessary to withdraw the Sardinian soldiers, to dismiss the Sardinian authorities, to infringe the constitution, to garrison the town with French troops, and to send a French police agent to superintend the operation? These circumstances, coupled with what may be termed the unnatural unanimity of the vote, may fairly warrant us in assuming that it

was by no means even a proximate expression of the real sentiments of the population. That so transparent a trick should have been unnecessarily passed off upon Europe, is an insult to those nations who were intended to be duped, and a disgrace to the constitutional Government which perpetrated it. That universal suffrage may be a convenient instrument in the hands of a ruler who, while he is governing upon the principles of absolute despotism, is obliged at the same time to conciliate the revolutionary sympathies of Europe, is very possible; but that the Government of a nation, whose boast it is that it is emerging from darkness into the full light of liberty, should inaugurate its regime by violating all the natural rights of a portion of its subjects, must deprive it of the sympathy of all who have the cause of freedom really at heart. While, on the other hand, had the people of Nice —released by royal proclamation from their allegiance to the King of Sardinia—taken advantage of the occasion to insist upon their rights as free men, and, if necessary, die for them, they at least would have secured that sympathy which seems going begging; but their behaviour throughout has proved that they are not yet competent to appreciate the value of free institutions; and we can scarcely regret, for their own sakes, though we may for the interest of civilisation generally, the fate which has overtaken them.

## X.

### HOW THE POPULATION OF FAUCIGNY WAS "CONSULTED."

THE last act of the drama was yet to come; and though the *spectacle* was not of a cheerful or exhilarating character, I determined to see it out. As soon, therefore, as the scrutiny was terminated, and the result of the Nice vote made known, I returned to Savoy, where the same process was to take place on the 22d of the month. On my way I visited Toulon, and inspected, as far as opportunity would permit, the naval preparations in progress there. I observed building two line-of-battle ships, two

*vaisseaux blindés*—which, however, the stranger is not allowed to inspect except from a boat—two frigates, and several gunboats.

On the morning of the 22d I found myself once more at Bonneville, in Faucigny; but a considerable change had taken place in the aspect of affairs since I had left it less than a month before. From every house, and almost from every window in every house, waved French flags. The hotel, which had formerly been the head-quarters of the anti-French party, and where I had dined with the members of the committee, was tricked out in all the splendours of red, white, and blue. The bookseller's shop where I had heard sentiments strongly hostile to France, now displayed a gigantic banner; but more remarkable than all, the house of the candidate who had contested Bonneville three weeks before on the Swiss interest, as opposed to the French, was now decorated with French flags. My old friends were nowhere to be found: the committee had evaporated; and throughout the town, where recently party feeling ran so high, and anti-French annexation was rampant and openly expressed, there was not a syllable to be heard against it. A little shopkeeper, whom I knew formerly as a furious anti-Frenchman, was now, with difficulty, dug out of his back shop, and owned to having just voted in favour of France as an act of self-preservation. "What could I do?" he said, "the concierge de la ville brought me two tickets this morning, with a message from the intendant that if I did not vote them it would be the worse for me. He also asked where my French flag was, and advised me, if I valued my liberty, to show one without delay. There is the flag, and here is the other voting ticket—a similar one I have just voted, but this I present to you"—

"BULLETIN DE VOTATION.

"La Savoie veut-elle être réunie à la France?
"Oui et zône."

My informant went on to tell me that every voter had received his ticket from the police authorities, and smiled when I asked him where I could procure a *non* ticket. "No printing-house here would venture to print one," he said; "you would have to get them from Geneva." The addition of the word "zone" struck me as

curious, and I asked the object of its insertion in the voting ticket. The device was ingenious. The authorities, fearing that though the people had not the courage to vote *non*, they might be bold enough to abstain from voting at all, gave it to be understood that such a course would not prevent their being annexed, but that they would thereby lose their commercial zone or free frontier with Switzerland, upon which their future prosperity would depend; in other words, by voting, they would be annexed and get their zone—by abstaining, they would be equally annexed, but ruined. By a recent French circular I perceive it stated that the desire of the Emperor to carry out the conditions of neutrality, as laid down in the 92d article of the treaty, has induced him to grant this zone. It was originally invented as an "election dodge," and served the purpose admirably, being used either as a bribe or a threat. If it is again to do duty in a conference, this *idea* will have done good service. The Hotel de Ville, although a Sardinian Government building, was covered with French flags, on one of which was inscribed. "France et Zone," but not a Sardinian flag was visible. The following official proclamations were posted upon the walls of the same building :—

"*Inhabitants of Bonneville,*

"The treaty concluded on the 24th of March last between the Emperor of the French and his Majesty Victor Emmanuel, the immense majority of votes in favour of the candidate who represented the French idea, the late proclamation of the Governor of Annecy, who invites us himself 'to give a free course to the sympathies which draw us towards France,' permit us for the future openly to express our sentiments, our aspirations. In his solicitude for his new subjects, his Majesty Napoleon III. sends amongst us one of the members of the Senate, M. Laity, to study the wants, and understand what are the desires, what is the future of Savoy. He will prove to our future sovereign that we sympathise in his great and generous ideas, that we enter into his views, in according to his illustrious envoy a reception worthy of the high mission which is confided to him.

"Fellow-citizens and friends,—We are inaugurating a new era of peace and concord. Let there be no more political dissensions to create mistrust and hate, to divide men of heart and of action

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who are the best fitted to understand each other. We count upon the enlightened patriotism of the inhabitants of Bonneville. On the decisive day, forgetting the past and full of confidence for the future, let us have but one rallying-cry,

"Vive la France et l'Italie.
"Vive Napoleon III.
"Vive Victor Emmanuel II.

"*The Syndic,*
*afterwards Intendant,* } T. GUY."

Another proclamation, calling absention "a crime" and ending "Vive la France, vive l'Empereur," signed by the same man as Intendant, was posted side by side with the following still stronger official manifesto :—

"The syndic of Bonneville notifies, that the Communal Council will assist at the benediction of the flags which the Imperial Government has presented to the commune,—that this religious ceremony will take place on Sunday the 22d, at seven o'clock A.M., —that the cortège will leave the Hotel de Ville to go to the church. All the electors are invited to this ceremony, which will immediately precede the opening of the urns. In the morning the Hotel de Ville will be *pavoisé* with the French flags and national colours. The flag inscribed Zone and France will be hoisted upon the front of the Hotel de Ville. All the inhabitants are invited to decorate their houses with flags of the same colours.

"Fellow-citizens,—The solemn moment approaches. The province of Nice given to France, as well as Savoy, by the treaty of the 24th of March, has given an almost unanimous vote in favour of reunion to France.

"Shall we be less French than our brothers the Nizzards?

"The Imperial Government has made its *debut* by a signal benefit, by giving us the customs zone, which has been refused hitherto. It assures to us the prosperity of the country. Its generosity will not end here. French engineers have explored the province to study the banks of the rivers, the state of our roads, and the public works most useful to the country. The numerous mines of Faucigny will be worked, the condition of our *collège* will be improved. Let us show our gratitude to the Emperor. Let us give

a free course to our sympathies, so long restrained, and prove, by a compact and unanimous vote, that we are as much French as our fathers were.

"Vive l'Empereur.
"Vive la France.

"*The Syndic*, DUFOUR."

It must have been a relief to the Sardinian official, whose sympathies in favour of a foreign country had been "so long restrained," while serving his own Government, to be able at last, with its consent and approval, to utter these treasonable words. The official blessing of the French flags was calculated to create a great effect upon a somewhat weak and superstitious population, and was a well devised measure. With reference to it the Intendant, in one of his circulars to the syndics, says,—"'MM. les Commissaires de mandement' will distribute the flags which *MM. les Curés* are authorised, and indeed invited, to bless. The standards will be in this case presented by the commune, at the head of the inhabitants, to MM. les Curés, who will receive them at the entry of the church. Finally, you will understand the importance which I attach to this last recommendation. You will take care that official proclamations, manifestoes, and notices, are preserved intact. All appeals to the passions—any notice whatever affixed without the required authorisation—will be immediately torn down. T. GUY, *Intendant.*" Considering that the sentiments of the population were supposed to be unanimous, and that M. Guy was still a Sardinian, this last act of official tyranny on the part of a free and constitutional Government was somewhat gratuitous. It is unnecessary to say that proclamations against French annexation were not only forbidden to be posted, but not allowed to be printed. A proclamation by the governor was as follows :—

"*Government of the Province of Annecy.*

"The Governor-regent of the province of Annecy is happy to be able officially to announce that his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon III. will visit Savoy in the course of the approaching summer.

(Signed) "LACHENAL,
"*The Governor-Regent.*"

Inasmuch as many of the syndics and local authorities were utterly opposed to the idea of French annexation, and without their co-operation the coercion of the people in the right direction could not by insured, the same authority, acting with the sanction and under the instructions of his Government, issued the following circular :—

"*The Governor of Annecy.*

"Considering that M. ——, syndic of the commune of ——, does not seem to have accepted favourably the consequence of the treaty of the 24th March last: considering that it is important, under the present circumstances, to have at the head of the administration of each commune, men devoted to the new order of things;

"It is decreed,—

"1. M. ——, present syndic of the commune of ——, is dismissed from his functions.

"2. The municipal counsellor —— is charged, until the new order, with the communal administration of the said commune.

"3. The above will be transmitted to MM. —— and ——, for their guidance.

(Signed) "LACHENAL,
"*The Governor-Regent.*"

"*Annecy, April* 1860.

The French organ (*Bon Sense*) of Annecy, commenting upon this most necessary measure, remarks :—

"A very important thing for the success of the great votation to which Savoy is about to be called, is to have at the head of each commune a syndic thoroughly devoted to the French annexation, for it is he who should give the impulse, and preside at the electoral operations. A syndic who is still devoted to Piedmont, or having a Swiss leaning, will be altogether out of place on such an occasion.

"We learn with pleasure that a great purgation has already taken place in the province of Chambery, of syndics hostile or suspected. We engage all sincere friends of France to keep a sharp look-out upon all their communal administrations.

"We do not doubt that the governor of the province of Annecy

will be ready, if such is the case, to make use of the full powers with which he is clothed, to replace in each commune all the syndics who will not loyally co-operate in the great cause of our national regeneration."

Having thus dealt with every communal authority supposed to be tinged with loyalty or patriotism, the Intendant of Faucigny issues a circular addressed to MM. the syndics, communal administrators of the congregations of charity, and public functionaries of Faucigny, in which he says, that "In order for the votation to have a happy result, it is necessary to enlighten the voters. Have the goodness to explain to these gentlemen, that it is no longer a question of pronouncing upon a preference between France and Piedmont, between France and Switzerland,—that Piedmont has ceded us to France by the treaty of 24th of March, and that we can no longer belong to it, and that Switzerland is foreign to the treaty submitted to their adhesion. There remains only the affirmative or negative vote upon their reunion to France: any other vote will be considered null. In voting affirmatively, we confirm the vote of our fathers in 1792. We re-enter into the great family, after a long absence, to enjoy there the rights and advantages attached to the name of a Frenchman, and to the inappreciable privilege of a customs zone, which you have so long desired, and which is now officially guaranteed.

"The Emperor, who is the personification of great and generous ideas, will not remain insensible to this manifestation of the sympathies of a people: he will restore to that people, in kindnesses a hundredfold, the satisfaction which they will have caused him:

"In voting negatively, Savoy will be reduced to impotence and anarchy. It has been my duty to make you understand the situation, in order to avoid mistakes.

(Signed) "T. Guy, *Intendant.*"

But lest this should not produce the desired effect, it was followed by another to the same authorities, which ran thus:—

"Sir,—Upon the 22d instant all the Savoyards are convoked to determine their destinies. I consider it useless to insist upon the importance of the solemn act in which your countrymen shall take part. Your mission, sir, imposes upon you new duties, new obli-

gations, greater even than those which your devotion to the common cause has doubtless dictated. Profit by the influence which your past services have given you over the country people, in order to make them understand the greater interest which attaches to their vote of the 22d and 23d April 1860. Let them be put upon their guard against the influence of those men who, unable to carry out their criminal attempts, would wish to involve them in their fall. Let them understand that those councils are perfidious, those patriots false, who say, 'It is all over, and it is useless to vote.' Absention is always the act of a bad citizen. To-day it will be still worse; it will be an irreparable fault. *There must be* an immense majority. The unanimity of the bulletins *must* show Europe that Savoy is altogether French at heart, and that the exigencies of politics are perfectly reconciled with national aspirations.

"You will give a striking proof of your devotion to Savoy by conforming to these instructions.

"In addressing myself to you with full confidence, I trust that you will afford me an active co-operation.

(Signed) "T. GUY, *Intendant.*"

I could multiply proclamations of this description, but if I have already run the risk of wearying the reader, I must plead the necessity which exists of bringing actual proofs of the pressure exercised upon the Savoyard population, as any mere statement to that effect would simply be denied by the French papers. During my first visit to Savoy, I did not gain the impression that the anti-French feeling was so strong as was evidently the case from the extreme measures taken to counteract it. Not only were the communal committees generally composed of the authorities themselves—not only were other committees not allowed to be formed, but the printing establishments were under surveillance, and letters opened and stopped at the post-office. As the registration of the voters was in the hands of the authorities, many of those suspected of opposition views were not included in the lists of voters at all; while, as the lists of "suspects" were popularly supposed to have been actually made out, the omission implied that their names were to be found in that less agreeable category.

Had the vote been secret, it is very possible that, in spite of all

the pressure used, a large number of *nons* might have been found in the urns. The fact that *nons* were not allowed to be printed was only a partial guarantee. The *oui* ticket had so distinctive a character that it would have been difficult of imitation; while, to have written a ticket, would have been an evident *no*. Still, to guard against any such contingency, M. Guy (who seemed to be omnipotent, though, on constitutional grounds, his authority might very fairly have been disputed), ordered that, as each elector presented himself, "the President, after having '*constaté*' the certificate of inscription, should receive the bulletin, one of the members of the office, or the secretary, will register the vote, by writing upon the list the name of the voter, *and the President will place the voting ticket in the urn.*" I have already described the views which the President was expected to entertain. Anxious to see this original mode of ballot in operation, I repaired to the voting-room in the Hotel de Ville, but was, of course, not admitted. A very fussy official, whom I suspect to have been M. Guy himself, apparently boiling over with rage at the attempted intrusion, told us we had no business there, but that, if it was any satisfaction to us to know it, three-fourths of the voters had already voted, and all in favour of France. He probably obtained his information from the President. So indignant was he at the natural curiosity we manifested in our investigations, that we had no sooner repaired to the hotel to refresh ourselves, than we received a visit from three gendarmes, whose cocked hats and swords were perhaps hardly calculated to inspire us with so much terror as the population they were intended to overawe. These gentry demanded our passports, and were much disappointed at finding that we not only had them with us, but that they were strictly *en règle*. Until their unexpected appearance I had hoped that, while the Sardinian Government had permitted the authorities to retain their official character, they had at least withdrawn that material force which the presence of their carabineers enabled the local functionaries to rely upon for coercing the population. There was a strange anomaly in allowing a man who ended his proclamations with "Vive la France," "Vive l'Empereur," to employ Sardinian soldiers. Either he was a Sardinian and a traitor, or a Frenchman, and incompetent to use Sardinians for his police purposes. We gently hinted as much to the poor men whose unpleasant duty it was to do the bidding of

the Intendant; and, to do them justice, they seemed to feel excessively embarrassed by the awkward task imposed upon them, and very much relieved to find that we were not arrestable. Nevertheless, throughout the remainder of our visit, our steps were dogged by one or other of these myrmidons; and I consequently found considerable difficulty in obtaining some of the proclamations, as the printing-offices had received strict orders not to allow them to be copied, and to stand in the street and do it was out of the question. It seemed desolate not to find a single one of my old friends in the town. I got tired of hearing nothing but "Vive la France!" and succeeded at last in discovering the only solitary representative of the liberal party left in Bonneville, who confirmed all I had already heard of what he termed "la pression epouvantable" to which the voters had been subjected. Every one of his colleagues had left the place—to remain would only have exposed them to persecution and insult; and as we left the town, we could sympathise with the motives which had induced them to desert it, for a crowd of boys and "roughs" had been stationed in the street to hoot and hiss us as we passed—our friends the gendarmes not upon this occasion interfering.

The result of the vote, which was announced two days afterwards, was, as we expected, almost unanimous, although three weeks had not elapsed since nearly 13,000 persons had signed a memorial against French annexation, and a member had been returned from Faucigny to the Turin Chamber to protest against it. Altogether, M. Laity, who was a fellow-prisoner with the Emperor at Ham, proved himself a worthy colleague of the Corsican Pietri; and in the event of its becoming shortly necessary to consult the populations of the Prussian provinces on the Rhine, we shall doubtless see these two indefatigable election-agents each with his corps of detectives again employed.

Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the bargain struck at Plombières was a political necessity, there surely was no occasion to carry out the terms of it in the manner above described. Had the Sardinian Government boldly acknowledged the grounds upon which it had determined to make the sacrifice, and spared us the farce of the popular vote, it might have pained, but it would not have outraged, the liberal sentiment of Europe. But to make use of popular institutions as a mask behind which to hide a

system of oppression and tyranny, is calculated to bring those institutions into contempt, and to discredit every Government conducted upon free and enlighted principles throughout the world. If people are to be slaves, let them at least be spared the miserable mockery of sham liberty. If, on the other hand, there be "a sacred cause of freedom," let it not be prostituted by being made subservient to the ends of despotism. The most absolute Government in Europe is preferable to a cunningly-devised imposture, which, while it dupes those who love liberty, avails itself of the appliances of those who hate it.

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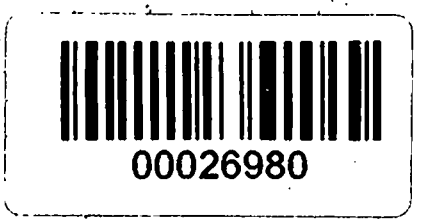
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